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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
State College, New Mexico

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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

PMA OFFICIALS DISCUSS POTATO PRICE SUPPORT - C. V. Hemphill, Chairman State PMA Committee, and V. G. Barton, PMA Price Support specialist, recently attended a conference of USDA officials at Salt Lake City, where they made final plans for carrying out the 1948 Price Support Program for Irish potatoes. Mr. Hemphill said that every effort will be made to assist producers to market their potatoes through regular channels. This will be accomplished by a loan program which will enable producers to hold their potato crops in storage to assure an even flow to market.

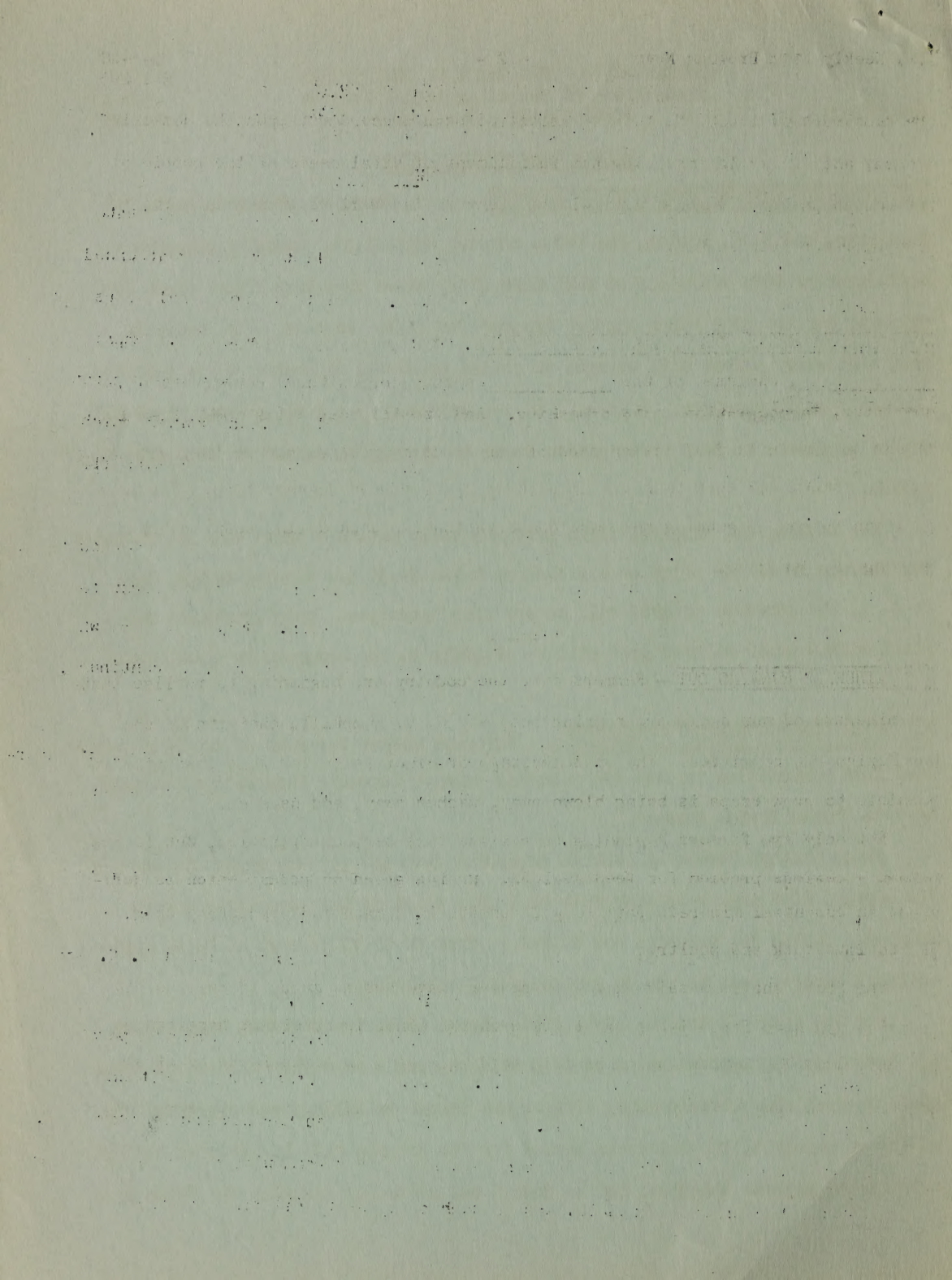
New Mexico, Mr. Hemphill said, produces early potatoes which are not suitable for storage so if the price should decline below \$2.35 per hundred-weight for U. S. 1, the purchase program will be put into operation. Only producers who plant within their allotted goal will be eligible in the program, he continued.

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EOA MEANS EXPORTS FOR U. S. FARMERS - A European market for some of our most important farm commodities is what the recently enacted Economic Cooperation Act will mean to United States farmers.

Since Western Europe at best is dependent upon the outside world for much of its supply, food unquestionably must be a main point of the European recovery program. During the twenties and thirties, from 60 to 75 percent of U. S. agricultural exports went to the 16 participating countries.

For the first 12 months, April 1948 - March 1949, the Economic Cooperation Act authorizes an appropriation of \$5.3 billion, and states that additional funds shall be available through June, 1952 to the extent authorized and appropriated. As far as possible, the materials needed for the program will be procured through established private channels, and in such a way as to (1) minimize the drain upon



the resources of the U. S. and the impact of such procurement upon the domestic economy and (2) avoid impairing the fulfillment of vital needs of the people of the United States. Surplus agricultural commodities will be worked into the program wherever practicable.

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CONSERVATION COSTS MONEY, LABOR AND MATERIAL - "No matter how you figure," says _____, chairman of the _____ county agricultural conservation committee, "conservation costs something. And it will cost a lot more if we let things go now instead of taking care of our erosion problems before they get worse."

He points out that there is no such thing as "free" conservation. The real question is one of getting the most conservation for each dollar spent -- of getting the job done.

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SOIL MINERALS RUNNING OUT - Farmers over the country are beginning to realize that the minerals of our soils are running out, say C. V. Hemphill, chairman of the New Mexico PMA committee. The rich heritage of minerals in the soil that make it possible to grow crops is being blown away, washed away, and used up.

Not only are farmers beginning to realize this serious situation, but it has become a serious problem for feed dealers. Grains grown on ground which is deficient in essential minerals fail to get results in growth and production when fed to livestock and poultry.

The State chairman said that some dealers have become aware of these deficiencies and have fortified their feeds with the minerals by direct application. In 1945, over 70,000 tons of phosphoric acid were used in mixed feeds to offset a lack of phosphorus in the soil. Not all dealers and feed mixers did this, and

it is not certain that the 70,000 tons took care of the deficiencies in the feed to which it was added.

Certain it is, though, that these mineral deficiencies in the soil will and do show up in feed and food deficiencies. Conservation programs, such as the Agricultural Conservation Program which works with individual farmers on their own farms, is helping to overcome some of the soil deficiencies by assisting farmers to restore some of the mineral losses which have resulted from heavy cropping and erosion.

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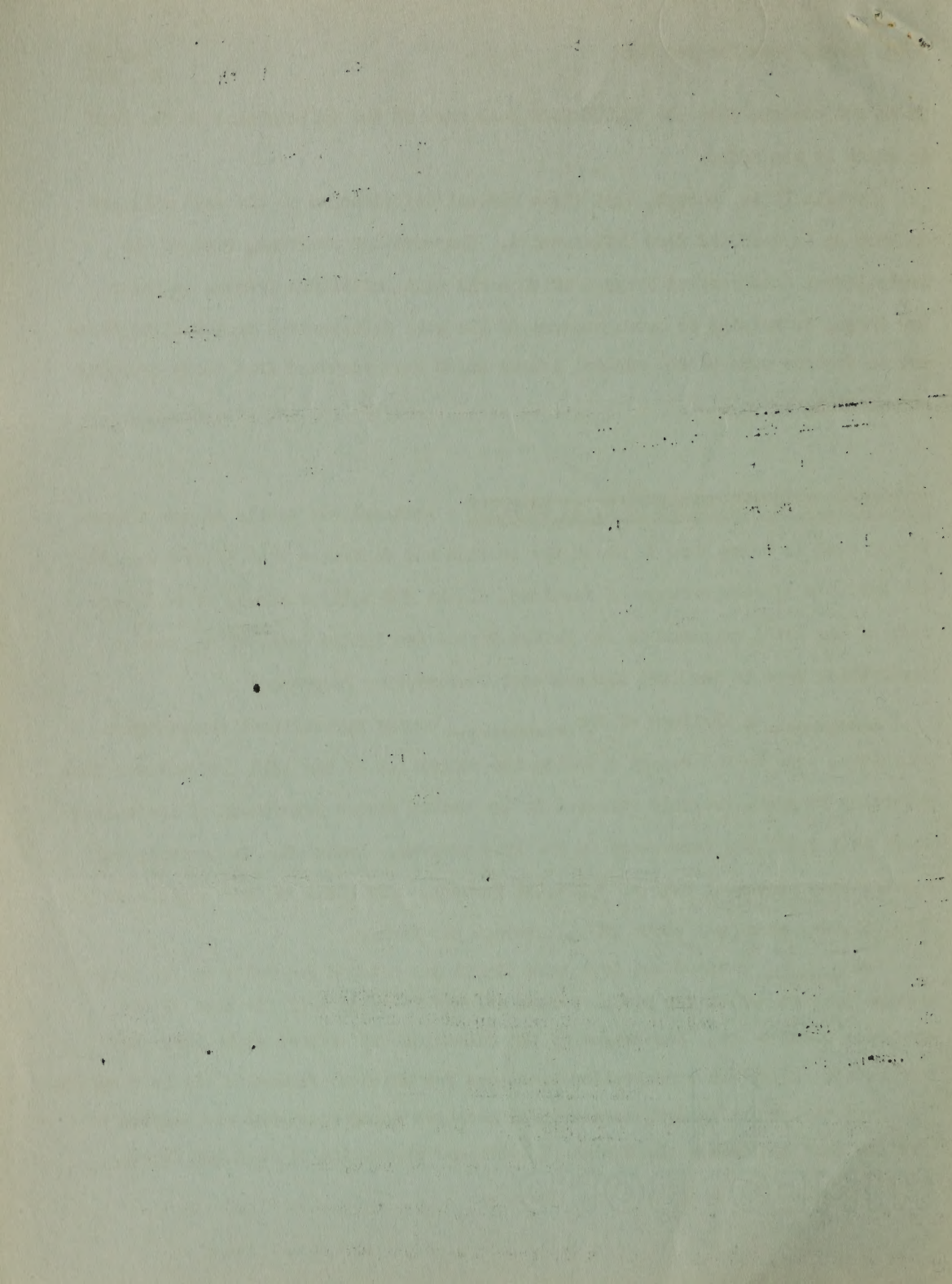
CONSERVATION ON TWO-THIRDS OF U. S. CROPLAND - Although not nearly enough conservation work is being done to check the erosion and depletion that is cutting into the Nation's limited acreage of farmland, almost 308 million acres, or 66.1 percent of the total cropland in the United States and Island Possessions, was on farms which were in the 1946 Agricultural Conservation Program.

_____, chairman of the _____ county agricultural conservation committee, says that a report covering the activities of the 1946 Agricultural Conservation Program, recently released by the United States Department of Agriculture, shows that 2,851,442 farms were in the 1946 program. Assistance in carrying out conservation practices went to 3,205,131 farmers. The total of this assistance was \$267,555,000, which was about \$83.48 average per farmer.

Mr. _____ pointed out that this \$83.48 was matched generally by the farmer, because program assistance given farmers amounts to about half the cost of the practices carried out. Encouraged by the financial aid offered under ACP, many farmers also carry out conservation practices for which no financial aid is received.

Even though not enough, conservation measures being completed are helping to hold the soil and assure the Nation of continued production of food and fiber.

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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

MORE FALL PIGS REQUESTED - Farmers are being urged to boost pig production this fall by 10 percent at the least, more if possible. Goals suggested to States, therefore, call for an average increase of 13 percent. A 10-percent increase would mean about 34.4 million pigs, 3 million more than were produced last fall.

Prices of feed grains are expected to be somewhat lower in the 1948-49 feeding year, beginning next October. At the same time, prospects are that continued large consumer demands and smaller output of other meats in 1949 will keep hog prices relatively high.

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EGG PRICE SUPPORTS AVERAGE 35¢ - Driers selling eggs to the Government under the recently announced purchase program must pay producers prices which average not less than 35 cents a dozen for all the shell eggs they buy, C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico Production and Marketing Administration Committee, said today. Where the processor agrees to accept delivery of eggs by producers directly at his drying plant, he is required to pay at least 37 cents per dozen.

Mr. Hemphill pointed out that these prices will be in effect for May and June under the Department of Agriculture's first direct price-support operation for eggs this year. The program will apply primarily in the Midwest, the area of heaviest production. Dried eggs bought by the Government will be held for foreign shipment or other use which would keep them from domestic trade channels.

Under the Steagall legislation, the Department is required to support the prices of eggs at a national average of 90 percent of parity. Since January 1, prices have averaged around the required support level. Recently, however, egg prices to producers and in terminal markets have declined, so that support operations become necessary if producer prices are to reflect the required returns.

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GROWING GRASS HEART OF RANGE CONSERVATION - "Getting the range to produce all the grass it will with the soil and moisture available is a major objective of the Agricultural Conservation Program in _____ County," says (Name), Chairman of the (County) Agricultural Conservation Committee.

Every rancher knows that the amount of grass on the range determines how much beef, lamb, or wool he has to sell. Likewise the grass determines whether rain soaks into the ground or rushes down to the river. If that moisture is led into the ground, it may be used by the plants to produce feed, or it may find its way into underground channels and ultimately into the streams that drain the range. Of course the grass holds the soil tightly, so that neither rain nor winds can get hold of it and move it away.

"All of these things of course lead to permanence....permanence in holding the soil, permanence of feed, and, therefore, permanence of the range cattle or sheep business."

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U.S. RANKS 4th IN GROWING POTATOES - U. S. farmers grew a lot of potatoes last year. But -- probably indicative of the desperate need for food and the limited growing areas overseas -- three other nations, Germany, Poland, and France, bested the U. S. in both potato production and acreage. In yields per acre, the U. S. was twelfth with 182 bushels.

Total world production of potatoes for 1947-48 is estimated at 7,280 million bushels, only slightly less than was produced in 1946-47, but about 14 percent less than the 5-year average. Output in both North America and in Europe, however, was down sharply from the previous year.

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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE WELL RUNS DRY - After the topsoil is gone is too late to begin thinking about saving the soil, says _____, chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee. He points out that waiting for crop yields to drop and gullies to appear before carrying out conservation practices to conserve soil and water is about like calling the fire department after the house has burned to the ground.

Some land has not been seriously damaged by erosion or depletion, but now is the time to keep it that way. Keep yields high, and the land will help to bear the expense of keeping up the fertility. But let the topsoil get away and with it the soil fertility, and the expense of rebuilding is expensive and the damaged land is not in condition to help bear the cost.

Conservation farming every year is the most economical and most effective farming, says the county chairman. It is like locking the barn door before the horse is stolen. Conservation farming year in and year out will help the land carry its own conservation costs.

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FARM DEPRESSION UNNECESSARY, SAYS ANDERSON - Farmers "do not have to go through the wringer again," Clinton P. Anderson told a group in Philadelphia in one of his last speeches as Secretary of Agriculture.

He pointed out, however, that "we must maintain both domestic and foreign policies that will prevent it...we should not wait for trouble to strike before we take the required action. Under favorable circumstances, farmers can probably look forward to a gradual price decline -- perhaps a decline of a third in the next few years."

American agriculture should benefit directly from the European recovery program in two ways, Mr. Anderson said. (1) During the life of the program, it will help to provide stable markets and yet allow farmers to shift their pattern of production in definite steps in order to meet more normal postwar demands; and (2) it should help to rebuild a more permanent European market, which has customarily taken 60 to 75 percent of all U. S. agricultural exports.

While food shortages in the world can be expected for a long time to come, Mr. Anderson stated that eventual solution of the world food problem calls for the development and conservation of natural resources, spreading the knowledge of both agricultural and industrial technology, providing for free-flowing world trade, monetary stabilization, and both national and international arrangements for using farm products that would otherwise become surplus.

Regarding the years "after ERP," the former Secretary said: "American agriculture needs the export markets that can be developed through world economic recovery, but by far its largest market, in time of world food crisis as well as in more normal times, is the home market made up of employed people.

"National policy must recognize the necessity of encouraging industrial activity and full employment...Clearly, then, farm policy and programs must (a) fight delaying actions in periods of price decline so as to maintain balance with industrial prices in fairness to farmers, and (b) provide price stoppers in relation to nonfarm prices...national policy should seek to maintain a floor under consumption and in other ways provide for stable markets."

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WINTER WHEAT MAY BE THIRD LARGEST CROP - If the winter wheat crop turns out as now indicated, U. S. farmers this year will produce the third largest crop in history. Prospects are for a crop of 845,484,000 bushels, a total exceeded only

in two other years: winter wheat production in 1947 was a record 1,067,970,000 bushels, and in 1946 the crop totaled 870,725,000 bushels.

Acreage remaining for harvest this year is estimated at 52,471,000 acres, about 4 percent less than last year, but 26 percent above the 1936-45 average. The portion of the seeded acreage that will not be harvested for grain is estimated at 10.5 percent, compared with 5.7 percent last year and the 10-year average of 12.4 percent. The indicated yield is 16.1 bushels per acre for harvest, 3.4 bushels lower than last year and $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel per acre lower than average.

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COTTON-CROP OUTLOOK IMPROVED - Cotton acreage, yields, and output for 1947 all showed increases over the year before. Here are official Department of Agriculture figures, based on census ginnings and information furnished by crop correspondents, field statisticians, and cooperating State agencies:

Acreage in cultivation on July 1, 1947, amounted to 21.5 million acres, 18 percent more than the previous year, but 12 percent less than the 1936-45 average. Lint yield in 1947 is indicated at 267.2 pounds per harvested acre, 31.9 pounds above 1946 and 16.6 pounds above the 10-year average.

The cotton crop totaled 11,851,000 bales, 3,200,000 bales more than the small 1946 crop but 539,000 bales less than the 10-year average. Cottonseed separated from the lint amounted to 4,679,000 tons, 33 percent more than from the previous year's crop, but about 9 percent less than the average.

The sharp upturn in production more than offset the slight drop in price. The average receipt of 31.9 cents per pound received for 1947 cotton sold before May 1, 1948, is three-fourths of a cent below the average for the 1946 season but 17.1 cents above the 10-year average. The combined value of cotton and cottonseed is estimated at \$2,291 million, only $2\frac{1}{2}$ percent lower than the record 1919-crop returns.

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ACP COMMITTEEMAN TOP FARMER - Each year farmers in 28,000 agricultural communities of the United States hold elections to choose community committeemen under the Agricultural Conservation Program. Farmer-elected delegates then get together and elect the county committeemen. From the ranks of county committees come the farmer-fieldmen and state committees of the Production and Marketing Administration. This, explains C. V. Hemphill, chairman of the New Mexico PMA committee is the organization that administers the Agricultural Conservation Program and other programs dealing directly with farmers.

As an indication of the calibre of men selected for these local committeemen jobs, the chairman cites William Redman of Zanesville, Ohio. This community committeeman was selected 1947 Champion in the system-wide soil conservation contest of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Not only is this committeeman teaching conservation to his neighbors but he is living conservation in the operation of his own 362-acre farm. He carried out such conservation practices as the contour strip cropping of 66 acres, the construction of 1,460 feet of sod waterways, the application of 100 tons of lime and 10 tons of commercial fertilizer on permanent pasture, the construction of a farm pond, 3 acres of trees planted, and 1,570 cubic yards of earth moved in filling gullies.

LESS ALFALFA SEED NEEDED - Alfalfa growers of the State of New Mexico are being urged to cut more of their alfalfa for hay this year and let less of it go to seed. For the last three years growers have exceeded the goals that were set up for harvest for seed. Last year growers exceeded their acreage by 37 percent and the year before by 46 percent.

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PRODUCTION BEST MEASURE OF SOIL LOSSES - Soil losses should be measured in something more than just so many tons of earth washed or blown away, says _____, chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee.

Soil losses, in a broad sense include all changes that result in decreased productivity for crops and may be grouped under two general heads - physical and chemical. Physical losses usually refer to removal of the soil itself through erosion. Chemical losses include removal of plant food from the soil in crops, through leaching and erosion.

Available nitrogen and phosphorus usually are concentrated in the top-soil. Most of its humus also is in the first few inches of top-soil. This is the soil that is lost in most cases.

Wind erosion carries away the lighter particles such as the tiny roots and decaying leaves and stems of plants. When soil is moved by water the coarser particles settle first - and this is the part of the soil which is least productive.

Some damage has already been done before the soil blows or washes away, says the chairman. Keeping land in a cultivated crop too long breaks down its resistance to erosion. Over-worked land usually is more subject to erosion than land that has been recently plowed out of grass and clover.

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HOW WELL-OFF IS U. S. AGRICULTURE? - Ever wondered about this often-talked-about "farm prosperity"? asks C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico Agricultural Conservation Committee. Such stories hardly ever give both sides of the picture, but for every "pro" there is a "con." Here's proof in the following highlights of the present U. S. farm economic situation.

1. Agriculture has reached a prosperity peak, but many farm families are poor.
2. Farm assets continue to rise, but much of the increase valuation could be wiped out by price declines.

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3. Liquid assets are a much larger part of the total than when the war started, but debt is beginning to increase, thus raising interest payments, and real estate taxes have risen sharply.
4. Farm product prices are 264 percent of the 1935-39 average and 20 percent above the peak of 1920, but purchasing power of those prices has turned downward.
5. Farm production is running about a third above prewar, but this offers the possibility of surplus troubles worse than in the past in case of market failures.
6. The pattern of production is still based on an abnormal export situation, which means that for both conservation and business reasons farmers must look forward to a considerable adjustment in the production pattern.

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